

audience's reaction and participation, and many more such factors) may often be as important, if not more important, to the meaning of a performance than the reduction of that performance to words on a printed page, which may also give a wholly misleading impression of the artistry involved.

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Further Reading

Ruth Finnegan. 1977. *Oral Poetry: Its Nature, Significance and Social Context*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992.

Ruth Finnegan. 1988. *Literacy & Orality: Studies in the Technology of Communication*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Flashbulb Memory The term *flashbulb memory* was coined by Roger Brown and James Kulik to describe 'memories for the circumstances in which one first learned of a very surprising and consequential (or emotionally arousing) event' (1977: 73). The metaphor derives from the use of a bright pulse of light to illuminate a scene being photographed; as the light adds depth of detail to the image, intense social or emotional trauma can add a sense of heightened awareness to the circumstances in which a particular PERSONAL MEMORY was encoded. Brown and Kulik noted that many in their generation had formed flashbulb memories of the assassination of American president John F. Kennedy in November 1963: still today, many individuals who were alive at that time can remember where they were and what they were doing when they first heard the news of the assassination. From their investigation of the memories that eighty students retained of ten events that had the potential to form flashbulb memories, Brown and Kulik concluded that there are six 'abstract canonical categories' typically associated with flashbulb memories: individuals remember 1) the place in which the news was heard; 2) 'the "Ongoing Event" that was interrupted by the news, [3] the "Informant" who brought ... the news, [4] the "Affect in Others" upon hearing the news, [5] as well as "Own Affect" and finally [6] some immediate "Aftermath"' (1977: 80). Based on the sense of vividness self-reported by respondents, Brown and Kulik hypothesized that flashbulb memories might be exempt from normal patterns of MEMORY PERSISTENCE AND DECAY and thus form a highly reliable set of memories.

Since the initial work of Brown and Kulik, memories of many events having the potential to form flashbulb memories have been studied, including memories of the beginning of the American bombing of Iraq under President George W. Bush, the O. J. Simpson trial verdict, the death of Princess Diana, the resignation of Margaret Thatcher, the loss of the space shuttle Challenger, and the terrorist destruction of the twin towers in New York on 11 September 2001. The results of these studies have revealed that while individuals generally consider their own flashbulb memories to be highly accurate, perhaps due to their vividness and sense of personal significance, in actual practice these memories are about as accurate as other memories not associated with such traumatic events. It is hypothesized that the emotional impact of the flashbulb memory tends to lead to its being assessed as accurate.

David Pillemer has characterized flashbulb memories as a subset of a wider category that he describes as 'personal event memories'. For Pillemer, memories of personal trauma, flashbulb memories, memories of critical incidents, and moments of insight are all varieties of personal event memories. Such events evoke a strong emotional response and are likely to form memories of the personal circumstances occurring at the time of the formation of the memory, together with vivid sensory memories that enable the reliving of the event in the imagination.

Robert K. McIver has argued that while none of the pericopes in the Gospels or accounts in the Acts of the Apostles exhibit all six of the abstract canonical categories identified by Brown and Kulik, many of them fit the criteria of personal event memories as outlined by David Pillemer. He has further argued that the accuracy

of the personal event memories that found their way into the Gospel accounts should be evaluated in the light of what is known of the accuracy of flashbulb memories, given that flashbulb memories are a type of personal event memory.

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Further Reading

Brown, Robert, and James Kulik. 1977. 'Flashbulb Memories'. *Cognition* 5: 73–99.

McIver, Robert K. 2011/2012. *Memory, Jesus, and the Synoptic Gospels*. SBLRBS. Atlanta: SBL Press; Leiden: Brill.

Pillemer, David B. 1998. *Momentous Events, Vivid Memories*. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press.

Talarico, Jennifer M., and David C. Rubin. 2003. 'Confidence, not Consistency, Characterizes Flashbulb Memories'.

Psychological Science 14: 455–61.

Foley, John Miles John Miles Foley (1947–2012) was the W. H. Byler Endowed Chair in the Humanities at the University of Missouri, where he held appointments in the Departments of English, Classical Studies, Anthropology, and Germanic and Slavic studies. His specialization was the comparative study of ORAL TRADITIONS and literature with roots in oral tradition, especially Serbo-Croatian oral traditions, Homer, and Old English literature. He founded the journal *Oral Tradition* and edited a number of collections that demonstrated the far-reaching implications of the comparative study of oral traditions in the study of literature (see especially Foley 1998; 2005). For example, he corrected the earlier emphasis on composition by demonstrating that the same structures that have compositional utility for oral poets also provide meaning for their reception by the traditional audience.

In addition to his various edited works, Foley's primary scholarly contributions include the most thorough study to date of the Parry-Lord approach to oral traditions (1988) and a series of monographs that extended the Parry-Lord approach in important ways. Using his knowledge of linguistics, Foley extended ALBERT LORD's notion of a SPECIAL GRAMMAR for oral traditions into what Foley calls the 'traditional REGISTER', demonstrating that oral poets use a special traditional language that acts as a medium within individual oral performances for conveying meaning from the performer to the audience (1990; 1991; 1995; 1999). Although MILMAN PARRY and Lord focused almost exclusively upon composition, Foley drew from reception studies, especially the reader-response theory of Wolfgang Iser, to emphasize how the structures in oral traditions also facilitate the audience's reception of performances (1991). For example, Foley extended the discussion of how noun-epithet formulas have a compositional function by demonstrating that, through the use of METONYMY ('a mode of signification wherein the part stands for the whole'; 1991: 7), these same noun-epithet FORMULAS recall in the mind of the audience all of the actions of the individual who is described by a specific formula.

Foley also combined the insights of the Parry-Lord approach with other theoretical models in order to extend their implications. *The Singer of Tales in Performance* (1995) brings the performance approaches of RICHARD BAUMAN, DELL HYMES, and DENNIS TEDLOCK into the conversation, thereby explaining further the PERFORMANCE ARENA of oral traditions. In *Oral Tradition and the Internet: Pathways of the Mind* (2012), Foley uses electronic media as an analogy for oral traditions, arguing that neither of these media follow carefully scripted, linear trajectories but instead provide a multitude of pathways which the internet surfer and the oral poet can choose as they move forward. These observations are emphasized in the parallel website, The Pathways Project (<http://www.pathwaysproject.org>), in which registered users can visually see the pathways that they have chosen as they move from one topic to another on the website.

Although biblical studies was not one of his primary areas of research, Foley nevertheless has had a significant impact on the field and directly contributed to its dialogue. He participated numerous times in meetings of